

## eQ Homes, Ashcroft big winners at sales and marketing awards

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eQ Homes' Atticus model won for best townhome. The home also won at last month's Housing Design Awards. CREDIT: JVLPHOTO.COM

Builder eQ Homes has been piling up the accolades this fall.

Fresh off big wins at the Housing Design Awards in October, where the company was named production builder of the year and its Greystone Village development won for best planned new community, eQ has now scooped up the most trophies at the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association's sales and marketing awards, called the SAMs.

eQ's seven trophies handed out at an awards luncheon Tuesday at the Infinity Convention Centre earned the builder an eighth award: the Grand SAM for the most wins.

"A great effort by a great team shows off. I couldn't be prouder of our team," said eQ marketing and brand manager Tobin Kardish. "As we've grown as a company, so have our talents as a company and it's starting to show."

The trophies were awarded for a mix of categories, from model homes to sales representatives to its design centre. And that winning Greystone Village project? It picked up another trophy, this time for best condo project for its River Terraces building, while eQ's well-established golf-course development of eQuinelle in Kemptville captured the award for best community.

"So much effort and time and care has gone into creating (eQuinelle)," said Kardish. "It reflects on a fabulous year we've had there. Sales have been great and it's nice to be recognized by our peers. It truly has become a one-of-a-kind community." Also winning big was Ashcroft Homes, which grabbed six of the marketing awards for an extensive campaign promoting its luxury Monocle condo on the former Les Soeurs de la Visitation convent site in Westboro.



Ashcroft's extensive marketing campaign for its luxury Monocle condo building at the former Les Soeurs de la Visitation convent site in Westboro scooped up six awards COURTESY ASHCROFT HOMES

"They had a real designer approach," said judge Karen Kavanagh, an advertising professor at Algonquin College.

Fellow judge Ani Bogovic of Dekla Developments agreed, singling out the Monocle brochure. "The brochure is beautiful, it's very touchy feel... it's very rich looking and the pictures were vibrant."

In the five model home categories, Richcraft was the only builder to capture more than one award, winning for two of its single-family models and showing how drama and being bold with colour and pattern can pay off.



eQ Homes teamed up with design firm West of Main to create a winning design centre. COURTESY EQ HOMES

Its Beechside single, for instance, featured rich blue walls paired with crisp white cabinets in the kitchen for a fresh and vibrant look, while its Cedarbreeze single opted for a new take on timeless elegance with a wonderfully moody master bedroom treatment and eye-popping black-and-white ensuite in geometric tile.

“Graphic prints, that’s a big trend, but some people are very scared of it, so I thought it was interesting that a lot of them took the risk and just did it to give themselves an edge,” said returning judge and designer Jen Robinson of Jen Robinson Designs, referring to the Richcraft model and others.

She also noticed the use of bold light fixtures and mid-century modern furniture, as well as wallpaper popping up in almost all of the 15 models entered.



The already award-winning Tweed model by Tartan Homes won for best bungalow single.

“It’s a great way to add a feature wall without just doing a different colour of paint. It adds some personality.”

The constant challenge in model homes is in balancing the need to appeal to the masses — hence the typical emphasis on neutrals to make it easier for buyers to picture themselves living in the home — with the need to stand out from the crowd and create a home that’s memorable.

“That’s the hard thing,” said Robinson. “That’s where I think those light fixtures come in and the wallpaper; the things you can change but that make that model kind of stand out.”

Richcraft also picked up a pair of awards for best builder sales team and best design centre consultant.

While the model homes are the attention grabbers, there’s a lot to be said for the supporting cast of sales staff and marketing materials.



Taking neutrals to another level, Richcraft came up with a winning design for its Cedarbreeze single-family home. CREDIT: MIV PHOTOGRAPHY

"Sometimes you forget all the moving parts," noted judge A.J. Plant of Exit Realty Eastern Ontario. "There's people behind the scenes." Plant judged the seven sales achievement categories and while he found there was one that stood out in each category, he "would have hired all of them."

Because buying a home is not a quick sale, successful sales staff need to be good at building and maintaining relationships, added Brian Jeffrey of the housing information website All Things Home, who also judged the sales staff categories.

"A lot of the people we talked with, that was something that came out: They go the extra mile, they meet people off hours, they work hard at establishing and building a relationship with the new homeowners."

And as for the marketing material, Kavanagh noted: "Every year I think it gets better in terms of the cohesiveness of the campaign... (Companies are) really also getting to know their target audience and it's showing in the materials."

The awards, which were hosted by the housing association, recognized 40 builders, renovators and supporting companies in 36 categories.

### Here are all the winners

#### Best Town Home Model

The Atticus, eQ Homes

#### Best Single-family Home Model (under 2,500 sq. ft.)

The Beechside, Richcraft

#### Best Single-family Home Model (2,501-3,000 sq. ft.)

The Cedarbreeze, Richcraft

#### Best Bungalow Model (Single)

Tweed, Tartan Homes

**Best Condo Model (Low-rise)**

Vista, Uniform Urban Developments

**Best Community**

eQuinelle, eQ Homes

**Best Condo Project**

River Terraces at Greystone Village, eQ Homes

**Most Environmentally Friendly Builder**

eQ Homes

**Best Builder Sales Assistant**

Natalie Desnoyers, Cardel Homes

**Best Builder Sales Representative**

Megan Van Rijt, Greystone Village, eQ Homes

**Best Builder Sales Team**

Richcraft

**Best Design Centre Consultant**

Ashley Huard, Richcraft

**Best Renovator Sales Representative**

Paulette MacGregor, Amsted Design-Build

**Best Industry Partner Sales Representative**

Cathy MacKinnon, RBC Mortgage Specialist

**Best Industry Partner Sales Team**

Milborne Group

**Best Builder Print Ad**

Monocle, Ashcroft

**Best Builder Radio Ad**

Campanale Homes

**Best Builder Digital Display Ad**

Blackstone, Cardel Homes

**Best Builder Social Media Ad Campaign**

Monocle, Ashcroft

**Best Builder Video**

Monocle, Ashcroft

**Best Builder Logo**

Echo, Uniform Urban Developments with TRUEdotDESIGN

**Best Builder Sales Centre**

eQuinelle, eQ Homes

**Best Builder Design Centre**

eQ Homes with West of Main

**Best Builder Signage**

Tie: Monocle, Ashcroft; Blackstone, Cardel Homes

**Best Builder Brochure**

Monocle, Ashcroft

**Best Builder Marketing Campaign**

Monocle, Ashcroft

**Best Builder Website**

Les Terrasses Francesca, Lépine Apartments with Finline Perspectives

**Best Marketing Innovation**

Online design centre, Tartan Homes

**Best Renovator Print Ad**

Lagois Design Build Renovate with TRUEdotDESIGN

**Best Renovator Signage**

Amsted Design-Build

**Best Renovator Website**

Ottawa General Contractors

**Best Industry Partner Showroom**

Spectrum Kitchen & Bath Design

**Best Industry Partner Marketing Campaign**

TRUEdotDESIGN

**Best Industry Partner Website**

Stone Design Concepts

**Grand SAM**

eQ Homes